

THE CLAIMS:

1. -17. (cancelled)

18. (currently amended) ~~An airlaid—A~~ composite absorbent web comprising a homogenous mixture of binder and particles of ~~cellulose-coated-particulate-coated~~ superabsorbent material ~~and~~ wherein the particles of ~~cellulose-coated-particulate-coated~~ superabsorbent material comprise ~~above~~ from about ~~85-30~~ to about ~~98~~97 weight percent of the ~~airlaid~~ composite absorbent web and the binder comprises from ~~below~~ about ~~15~~70 to about ~~23~~ weight percent of the ~~airlaid-composite~~ absorbent web.

19-21. (cancelled)

22. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid-composite~~ absorbent web according to Claim 18 wherein the binder comprises less than about ~~10~~40 weight percent of the ~~airlaid~~ composite absorbent web.

23. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid-composite~~ absorbent web according to Claim 18 wherein the binder comprises thermoplastic fibers.

24. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid~~ composite absorbent web according to Claim 23 wherein the thermoplastic fibers are bicomponent fibers.

25. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid-composite~~ absorbent web according to Claim 23 wherein the thermoplastic fibers are PE/PET staple fibers.

26. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid-composite~~ absorbent web according to Claim 18 wherein the binder comprises meltblown fibers.

27. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid-composite~~ absorbent web according to Claim 18 wherein the binder comprises elastomeric fibers.

28. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid~~ composite absorbent web according to Claim 27 wherein the elastomeric fibers comprise a polymer selected from the group consisting of styrene-isoprene-styrene block copolymers, styrene-butadiene-styrene block copolymers, styrene-ethylene/butylene-styrene block copolymers, styrene-ethylene/-propylene-styrene block copolymers, polyurethanes, elastomeric polyamides, elastomeric polyesters, elastomeric polyolefin homopolymers and copolymers, atactic polypropylenes, ethylene vinyl acetate copolymers, single-site or metallocene catalyzed polyolefins having a density less than about 0.89 grams/cc, and combinations thereof.

29. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid~~ composite absorbent web according to Claim 18 wherein the ~~absorbent~~ composite absorbent web is between about 50 gsm and about 1500 gsm basis weight.

30. (currently amended) ~~An airlaid~~ A composite absorbent web comprising a homogenous mixture of binder and particles of ~~cellulose-coated-particulate-coated~~ superabsorbent material wherein the ~~absorbent~~ composite absorbent web comprises about 2 weight percent or more of thermoplastic binder fiber and about ninety eight weight percent or less of particles of particulate-coated superabsorbent material.

31. (cancelled)

32. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid~~ composite absorbent web according to Claim 18 further comprising at least one of non-coated superabsorbent materials, pulp fibers, synthetic fibers, odor control agents, and other natural or synthetic materials.

33. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid~~ composite absorbent web according to Claim 18 wherein the absorbent composite web has an absorbent capacity of between about 15 g/g and about 40 g/g.

34. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid~~-composite absorbent web according to Claim 18 wherein the composite absorbent web has a density of between about 0.1 g/cc and about 0.5 g/cc.

35. -51. (cancelled)

52. (currently amended) ~~An airlaid~~ A composite absorbent web consisting essentially of comprising a homogenous mixture of ~~binder and particles of cellulose-coated superabsorbent; wherein the absorbent composite web consists essentially of less than or equal to about 15~~ 70 weight percent to about 23 weight percent thermoplastic binder fiber and greater than or equal to about 85 30 weight percent to about ninety eight seven weight percent particles of cellulose-coated superabsorbent material.

53.-55. (canceled)

56. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid~~-composite absorbent web according to Claim 52 wherein the binder comprises less than about 10 weight percent of the composite absorbent web.

57. (canceled)

58. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid~~-composite absorbent web according to Claim 52 wherein the thermoplastic ~~fibers~~ binder fiber ~~are is~~ bicomponent ~~fibers~~ fiber.

59. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid~~-composite absorbent web according to Claim 52 wherein the thermoplastic ~~fibers are~~ binder fiber is PE/PET staple ~~fibers~~ fiber.

60. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid~~-composite absorbent web according to Claim 52 wherein the binder fiber comprises meltblown fibers.

61. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid~~ composite absorbent web according to Claim 52 wherein the binder fiber comprises elastomeric fibers.

62. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid~~ composite absorbent web according to Claim 61 wherein the elastomeric fibers comprise a polymer selected from the group consisting of styrene-isoprene-styrene block copolymers, styrene-butadiene-styrene block copolymers, styrene-ethylene/butylene-styrene block copolymers, styrene-ethylene/-propylene-styrene block copolymers, polyurethanes, elastomeric polyamides, elastomeric polyesters, elastomeric polyolefin homopolymers and copolymers, atactic polypropylenes, ethylene vinyl acetate copolymers, single-site or metallocene catalyzed polyolefins having a density less than about 0.89 grams/cc, and combinations thereof.

63. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid~~ composite absorbent web according to Claim 52 wherein the ~~absorbent~~ composite absorbent web is between about 50 gsm and about 1500 gsm basis weight.

64. (currently amended) ~~An airlaid~~ A composite absorbent web ~~consisting essentially of comprising:~~

a homogenous mixture of binder and particles of cellulose-coated superabsorbent material;

wherein the ~~absorbent~~ composite absorbent web ~~consists essentially of comprises at least~~ about 2 weight percent thermoplastic binder fiber and not more than about ninety eight weight percent particles of cellulose-coated superabsorbent material.

65. (canceled)

66. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid~~ composite absorbent web according to Claim 52 further ~~consists essentially of comprising~~ at least one of non-coated superabsorbent materials, pulp fibers, synthetic fibers, odor control agents, and other natural or synthetic materials.

67. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid~~ composite absorbent web according to Claim 52 wherein the ~~absorbent~~ composite absorbent web has an absorbent capacity of between about 15 g/g and about 40 g/g.

68. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid~~-composite absorbent web according to Claim 52 wherein the composite absorbent web has a density of between about 0.1 g/cc and about 0.5 g/cc.

69.-70. (canceled)

71. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid~~ composite absorbent web according to Claim 18 wherein the ~~absorbent~~-composite absorbent web further comprises a support member.

72. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid~~-composite absorbent web according to Claim 71 wherein the support member comprises at least one of a spunbond web, a meltblown web, a nonwoven web, a tissue web or a pulp web.

73.-74. (canceled)

75. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid~~ composite absorbent web according to Claim 52 wherein the ~~absorbent~~-composite absorbent web further ~~consists essentially of~~comprises a support member.

76. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid~~-composite absorbent web according to Claim 75 wherein the support member comprises at least one of a spunbond web, a meltblown web, a nonwoven web, a tissue web or a pulp web.

77. -79. (canceled)

80. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid~~ composite absorbent web according to Claim 18 wherein the ~~absorbent~~-composite absorbent web has an edge compression of below about 1.2 g/gsm.

81. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid~~-composite absorbent web according to Claim 80 wherein the ~~absorbent~~ composite absorbent web has a saturated capacity of above about 18 g/g.

82. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid~~-composite absorbent web according to Claim 81 wherein the ~~absorbent~~ composite absorbent web has a wet tensile strength of greater than about 0.5 g/gsm/in.

83. - 85. (canceled)

86. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid~~-composite absorbent web according to Claim 52 wherein the ~~absorbent~~ composite absorbent web has an edge compression of below about 1.2 g/gsm.

87. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid~~ composite absorbent web according to Claim 86 wherein the ~~absorbent~~ composite absorbent web has a saturated capacity of above about 18 g/g.

88. (currently amended) The ~~airlaid~~-composite absorbent web according to Claim 87 wherein the ~~absorbent~~ composite absorbent web has a wet tensile strength of greater than about 0.5 g/gsm/in.